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October 1, 1986

The Honorable Ronald Reagan  
President of the United States  
The White House  
Washington, D.C. 20500

Executive Registry

86- [REDACTED]

Dear Mr. President:

We are greatly heartened by the research progress being made in the Strategic Defense Initiative (SDI). At the same time, we are dismayed by indications of large strides being made in Soviet defenses which may soon render U.S. retaliatory capabilities obsolescent. Therefore, in addition to a vigorous continuation of the SDI research program, we urge timely application of SDI technologies to the threats to peace posed by rapidly advancing Soviet offensive and defensive capabilities.

Specifically, employment in the very near term of the most modern defensive means can serve to deter use of Soviet tactical ballistic missiles. In this case, the early fruits of SDI work can be used in the next half-dozen years to deter war in the Middle East, and to defend our European and Asiatic Allies from attack with shorter-range Soviet ballistic missiles.

The same basic defensive technology, based on interceptor rockets, hypervelocity projectiles and lasers, may be used to defend all of the Western Alliance against attacks by sea-launched Soviet ballistic missiles, even in the '80's. Indeed, the Soviet Union may employ such defensive technology soon, whether we do or not.

Even within the ABM Treaty, we could and should deploy 100 defensive launchers at a single site in the U.S. What is to be carried on these launchers should continually express the latest advances in ongoing SDI research. However, such deployment activities should be supported separately from the SDI research program. The purposes of such deployments should include population defense, defense of critical military sites and exploration of advanced defensive technologies.

We are deeply concerned that a SDI research program which has no definite consequences for defense of America and its Allies within the next ten years will not be politically sustainable, and furthermore that this total absence of defenses against the growing Soviet ballistic missile threat imperils the entire Western Alliance. We believe that imperfect but significant defensive options have already been laid before the American leadership by the SDI, and that they must not only be continued toward perfection but also prudently exercised, while the political will to do so undeniably exists. Your leadership on this issue is critical in preventing a military imbalance similar to the one that led, a half-century ago, to the surrender at Munich.

Sincerely,

JIM COURTER

JACK KEMP

LOWELL WOOD

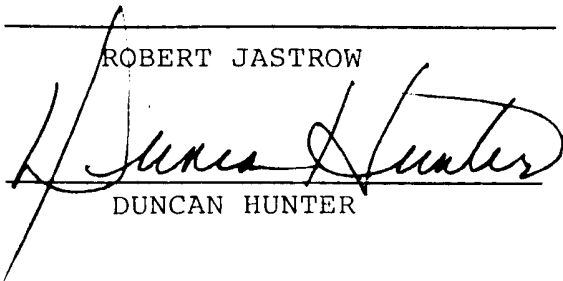
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